

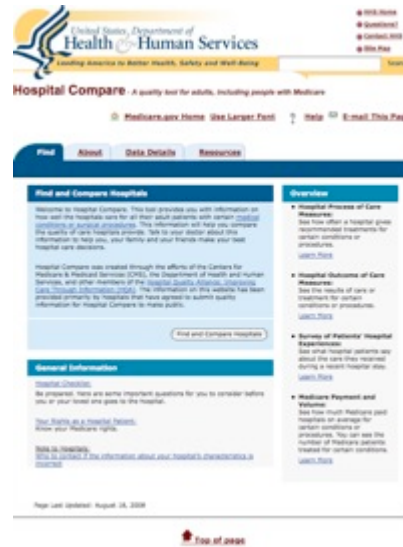


Comparing Cures

The site provides information on how any given U.S. hospital compares with national rates for mortality. For example, one available statistic provides details on death rates from heart attacks within 30 days of admission. The newly available information may lead to greater accountability, and, possibly, to improvements. Harlan Krumholz, who directs the Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation at the Yale-New Haven Hospital where the mortality measure was developed, noted that the death-rate information should “provide insights into where hospitals are compared to where they should be.”

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Hospital Compare is likely to be a useful service. Nonetheless, its chief failing is that it is provided by a branch of the federal government. The Constitution does not include provisions granting the Federal Government power to provide such a service. Indeed, by that standard, it could be argued that the entire Department of Health and Human Services should be abolished as unconstitutional. It seems likely that the Founding Fathers would have considered its functions, including those provided by Hospital Compare, as services that should be provided by the states themselves, and by the people through private initiatives.





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